

BULLETIN

Workplace Relations



Reference No: 7-day snap lockdown details/dh-8-21

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Further details on Victoria's 7-day Snap Lockdown released

Following yesterday's [Bulletin](#), further details have now been released on Victoria's latest 7-day snap lockdown. Under the new *Stay at Home Directions (Victoria)(No 4)* that took effect from 8pm last night, the five reasons for people to leave their home have been confirmed:

- getting necessary goods or services;
- care or other compassionate reasons;
- exercise (up to 2 hours per day);
- authorised work and permitted education if it can't be done from home; and
- to get vaccinated at the nearest possible location (and other specified reasons).

The limitation on exercise and shopping will be **five kilometres from home** – or the closest location (if not within the five kilometre radius).

A copy of these Directions can be accessed [here](#).

A [Table of Lockdown Restrictions](#) has also been released, which confirms that the following automotive industry businesses can continue to operate through this lockdown in **Victoria** as **authorised providers and workers**:

- Petrol stations, including a petrol station that sells groceries
- Vehicle and mechanical repair services
- Contactless 'Click and collect/deliver' services
- Emergency repair workers
- Roadside assistance services
- Ancillary and support businesses, where necessary for the operations of an authorised provider
- Administrative services provided by an employer to enable its employees to work from home – e.g. payroll and IT services
- Truck stops and roadhouses, but not the provision of seated dining or shower facilities to persons who are not transport, freight or logistics drivers.

In addition, the new *Workplace Directions (No 41)* and *Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria)(No 23)* also took effect from 8pm last night. A copy of the Workplace Directions can be accessed [here](#) and the Restricted Activity Directions can be accessed [here](#). As indicated by the Victorian Premier in yesterday's press conference, these are broadly in line with last month's lockdown requirements. A summary of how the above Directions impact those workplaces that are authorised to remain open is provided below:

Face coverings

Must be carried at all times and **worn indoors and outdoors** except if at home, or when visiting an intimate partner's place of residence or if an exemption applies.

Density quotients

For the above workplaces that are authorised to remain open during the lockdown, density quotients in shared spaces and publicly accessible areas at the work premises of **1 person per 4 square metres**.

QR Code Requirements

The electronic record keeping requirements through **Victorian Government QR Code Service** will continue to apply for those businesses that are eligible to continue operating during the lockdown period.

COVIDSafe Plan

VACC recommend that COVIDSafe Plans should be reviewed to ensure it remains current and that cleaning, signage, record-keeping and other applicable requirements are being adhered to and communicated with all relevant staff. Members are encouraged to contact the VACC OHSE Unit for any further information or assistance, including in relation to their [COVIDSafe Plan](#) obligations on 03 9829 1265.

VACC also provides the following advice on frequently asked questions:

Can I stand down employees?

Members who are unable to operate as a result of the latest 7-day snap lockdown, are advised to consult with affected employees about taking **paid annual leave, long service leave, or unpaid leave** during this period. VACC advises a similar approach may be taken by businesses who are unable to provide employees with their usual ordinary hours of work, as a result of the lockdown.

Where agreement is reached, a written record of the employee's request to take leave must be kept.

If agreement is unable to be reached and the business is unable to operate as a result of the lockdown, the employer is entitled to **stand down** the employee without pay.

Workers who suffer a reduction in hours as a result of the latest lockdown, will be able to access payments of **\$600** for individuals that lose **20 hours or more** of work, and **\$375** for individuals that lose between **8 and 20 hours** of work, through the Australian Government's COVID-19 Disaster Payment scheme. No liquid asset eligibility test will apply, with applications to be made through [Services Australia](#).

Members considering standing down an employee should contact our Industrial Relations experts on 9829 1123 or ir@vacc.com.au for further advice and assistance.

What entitlements apply for employees required to self-isolate/quarantine?

Employees who have visited a location at the date and time where a COVID-19 case has visited – may be required by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to get tested and quarantine, despite not feeling unwell or not having any symptoms.

An employee is entitled to paid **personal/carer's leave only** in circumstances where they are unfit for work due to personal illness or injury – or in relation to carer's leave, where they are required to provide care or support to a member of the employee's immediate family or household – because of a personal illness or injury affecting the member, or an unexpected emergency affecting the member. Therefore, an employee who is required to quarantine is **not entitled** to paid personal/carer's leave **unless** they meet these requirements.

Where the employee has sufficient **annual leave (or long service leave)** accrued, an employer may approve this request. In certain circumstances an employer might also consider agreeing to a request for annual leave in advance (i.e. prior to the leave having been accrued). Such an agreement must be in writing and meet a number of requirements. It is therefore recommended that members considering granting leave in advance contact the IR Department for further information.

Where neither paid personal/carer's leave nor annual leave is appropriate, the employer may approve a period of **unpaid leave** for the employee. In such circumstances it is important to note that employees required to self-isolate or quarantine by DHHS may be eligible for the **Australian Government's \$1,500 Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment and/or the Victorian Government's \$450 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Test Isolation Payment**. Employees seeking further information on eligibility requirements can be directed to [Services Australia](#) and the [DHHS](#).

What financial support is available to affected businesses?

Business Continuity Fund

The Fund will deliver **\$5,000 grants** to up to around 30,000 businesses that remain impacted by capacity limits placed on businesses by necessary public health restrictions. All recipients must have received or been eligible for the previous Business Cost Assistance Program.

As previously advised, eligible businesses will include non-essential retailers, and will be based on eligible ANZSIC classes. Details of those ANZSIC classes can be accessed [here](#). For those businesses who previously received payments through the Program, the payment will be made automatically.

Small Business COVID Hardship Fund

For small businesses that are not eligible under existing business support funds, the new Fund will enable those with a payroll of up to \$10 million who have experienced a **70 per cent or greater reduction in revenue**, to apply for grants of up to **\$5,000**. More information is available from [Business Victoria](#)

Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme and Landlord Hardship Fund

The *Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme* has been enacted following passage through Victorian Parliament yesterday. The Scheme is available to businesses with an annual turnover of less than \$50 million and have had a **decline in turnover of at least 30 per cent** in recent weeks.

Landlords will be required to provide proportional rent relief in line with a business's reduction in turnover. For example, a business with a turnover of 40 per cent of pre-pandemic levels can only be charged 40 per cent of its rent. Of the balance, at least half must be waived, with the remainder to be deferred.

Affected landlords will be entitled to **land tax relief of up to 25 per cent**, with small landlords who can demonstrate acute hardship also eligible to apply for payments as part of a \$20 million hardship fund.

Tenants and landlords are encouraged to enter negotiations directly, however, in cases where no resolution can be reached the Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) is available for mediation. Landlords cannot lock out or evict tenants without a determination from the VSBC while the Scheme is operating.

Tenants and landlords can contact the Victorian Small Business Commission for further information on 13 87 22 or vsbc.vic.gov.au

VACC will continue to keep members advised of developments. Members needing further advice or assistance are encouraged to contact VACC's Workplace Relations team on 03 9829 1123.

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